

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINGST 05375 01 OF 02 101928Z

44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00 AGRE-00
NEA-10 AID-05 TRSE-00 /073 W
----- 083151

O R 101830Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3367

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 5375

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JM

SUBJECT: JAMAICA'S ELECTIONS: FIVE DAYS TO GO

1. SUMMARY. IN FIVE DAYS JAMAICA GOES TO THE POLLS TO MAKE WHAT JAMAICANS BELIEVE WILL BE A FUNDAMENTAL DECISION ABOUT ITS FUTURE. THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN HARD-FOUGHT, BITTER IN TONE AND MARKED BY VIOLENCE. OVER THE LAST WEEKS, THE RULING PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY(PNP) HAS DISPLAYED MORE VIGOR THAN THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY (JLP) . HOWEVER, ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION WITHIN THE RULING PARTY WERE SURFACED TODAY WHICH APPARENTLY SIGNAL A JLP RETURN TO BATTLE. OUR PRESENT ASSESSMENT OF ELECTION PROSPECTS GIVES THE PNP 34 SEATS IN THE 60-MEMBER PARLIAMENT. BUT THIS WOULD BE A RELATIVELY MODEST VICTORY AND, GIVEN THE DEPTH OF FEELING AND THE SEVERAL IMPONDERABLES WHICH CHARACTERIZE THIS ELECTION, WE DO NOT DISCOUNT ENTIRELY A JLP WIN, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLY SLIM. END SUMMARY.

2. JAMAICA IS NOW FIVE DAYS AWAY FROM ITS GENERAL ELECTION, AN EVENT WHICH MANY JAMAICANS ARE FIRMLY CONVINCED WILL BE THE LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR THEIR COUNTRY TO AVOID A RADICAL AND IRREVERSIBLE CHANGE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINGST 05375 01 OF 02 101928Z

IN ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS. AS THEY

SEE IT, IF PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY AND HIS PNP WIN THE ELECTION, THE RESULT WILL BE A MANDATE FOR THE PNP TO IMPLEMENT-- IN DEAD EARNEST-- ITS PROGRAMS OF "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM," AND THUS CONFER ON THE STATE AN ALL-PERVSAIVE ROLE; IF, IN CONTRAST THE JLP UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF EDDIE SEAGA WERE TO WIN, THIS WILL BE READ AS A MANDATE TO REDUCE THE GOVERNMENTS'S ROLE. (THIS ROLE MUST INEVITABLY REMAIN SUBSTANTIAL EVEN IF THE JLP WINS, HOWEVER.) THE DEBATE OVER JAMAICA'S FOREIGN POLICY PARALLELS THAT REGARDING DOMESTIC MATTERS. THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT'S CLOSE LINKS WITH CUBA, ITS IDENTIFICATION WITH THE THIRD WORLD AND ITS SUPPORT OF A "NEW ECONOMIC ORDER" EVIDENCE THE PNP'S WILLINGNESS TO ABANDON THE PAST; THE ATTACKS ON THE PNP AND ITS FOREIGN POLICIES BY SEAGA AND HIS JLP FOLLOWERS ARE INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE THE OPPOSITION PARTY'S DESIRE TO CLING TO OLDER, HOPEFULLY MORE SECURE AND CERTAIN RELATIONSHIPS. HOWEVER, WHILE THE OUTWARD ISSUES MAY BE THE "PROS" AND "CONS" OF "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM" OR THE RELATIVE MERITS OF ASSOCIATION WITH CUBA AND THE THIRD WORLD AS AGAINST CONTINUED RELIANCE ON FIRM BUT DEPENDENT LINKS WITH THE DEVELOPED NATIONS, THE REAL ISSUE CENTERS ON CHANGE: I.E., HOW MUCH, HOW FAST AND WHAT KIND.

3. THE CAMPAIGNING SO FAR HAS BEEN SHORT ON SUBSTANCE BUT LONG ON RHETORIC, AND CHARACTERIZED BY INCREASINGLY HARSH CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES. MOREOVER, VIOLENCE IS PERVASIVE. WE ARE TOLD THAT JAMAICAN CAPAIGNS ARE, TRADITIONALLY, HARD-FOUGHT, AND THAT THE LEVEL OF INVECTIVE NOW EVIDENT IS NORMAL. SO, TOO, WE ARE TOLD, IS THE VIOLENCE, AND THERE SEEMS TO BE AN ARGUABLE CASE THAT UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY THERE MAY EVEN BE LESS. (WE RESERVE JUDGEMENT, HOWEVER, WITH A WEEK TO GO. THE MEMORY OF THE YORK TOWN INCIDENT (KINGSTON 4812 AND 4768) AND THE BOB MARLEY SHOOTING (KINGSTON 5317) ARE STILL VERY VIVID, AND THERE ARE DAILY INSTANCES OF SHOOTINGS, STABBINGS, BEATINGS AND CLASHES.) HOWEVER, WHILE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINGST 05375 01 OF 02 101928Z

JAMAICANS MAY HAVE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO VIGOROUS CAMPAIGNS-- WHICH THEY PUT BEHIND THEM SOON AFTER THE RESULTS ARE IN-- WE NOW DETECT AN ELEMENT OF POLARIZATION RESULTING FROM THIS CAMPAIGN WHICH MAY BE SOMETHING NEW AND COULD MAKE IT MUCH HARDER TO HEAL THE FISSURES WHICH THIS CAMPAIGN HAS CRATED. GIVEN THE ISSUES IN THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SURPRISING IF CLASS DISTINCTIONS HAD NOT BEEN

STRESSED. THE TENSIONS WHICH THIS MANIPULATION OF CLASS ANIMOSITIES CAN CREATE ARE, HOWEVER, BEARABLE AS LONG AS THEY CAN BE RELIEVED BY MOVEMENT BETWEEN CLASSES, AS HAS BEEN POSSIBLE HERE. HOWEVER, THE PNP IN THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN HAS BEGUN TO LAY EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO BENEFIT THE " REAL" JAMAICAN, AND HERE THE DISTINCTION MOVES FROM CLASS TO RACE. A PNP VICTORY, AND ESPECIALLY A BIG ONE, MAY THUS CREAT A

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINGST 05375 02 OF 02 101950Z

42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00 AGRE-00
NEA-10 AID-05 TRSE-00 /073 W
----- 083435

O R 101830Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3368

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 5375

FAR DEEPER CLEAVAGE IN JAMAICAN SOCIETY THAN THE PRESENT ONE OF CLASS, AND ONE WHICH IT COULD BE VERY HARD TO BRIDGE.

4. AS OF THIS MOMENT, THE PNP APPEARS TO HAVE ACHIEVED SUBSTANTIAL MOMENTUM, AND IS LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO SUSTAIN THAT MOMENTUM IN THE FEW DAYS LEFT. THE PNP APPEARS TO BE MAKING UNABASHED USE OF THE VARIOUS INSTRUMENTALITIES OF GOVERNMENT: THE AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION (API), THE SEMI-AUTONOMOUS JAMAICA BROADCASTING CORPORATION ("JBC" IS NOW SAID TO MEAN "JOSHUA BROADCASTING CORPORATION), AND THE WPA-TYPE "IMPACT PROGRAM" (PARTICIPATION IN WHICH APPEARS TO REQUIRE (A) POLITICAL LOYALTY AND (B) KICKBACKS TO THE PNP'S COFFERS). THE JLP DOES NOT YET APPEAR TO HAVE REGAINED ITS EARLY VIGOR, ALTHOUGH

THIS MAY HAVE CHANGED AS OF YESTERDAY. WE HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT THE RELEASE OF ITS MANIFESTO WOULD TRIGGER A NEW AND FINAL ROUND OF VIGOROUS ACTIVITY. THE JLP MANIFESTO APPEARED ON SATURDAY LAST (DECEMBER 7)-- VERY LATE IN THE GAME-- AND HAS PROVEN TO BE AN EXTREMELY DAMP SQUIB. THE JLP'S CAMPAIGN OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS HAS BEEN MARKED BY APPARENT IMMOBILISM ALTHOUGH ITS WORK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE--
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINGST 05375 02 OF 02 101950Z

AS DISTINCT FROM THAT IN KINGSTON-- MAY HAVE BEEN FAR MORE EFFECTIVE. YESTERDAY MORNING THE JLP BEGAN TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE IRAN SUGAR DEAL, AND THIS MAY LEAD TO POLITICALLY POTENT ALLEGATIONS OF LARGE-SCALE CORRUPTION IN THE PNP.

5. WE HAVE RECENTLY BEGUN AN ALMOST DAILY REVIEW OF THE STANDINGS OF THE CANDIDATE PROSPECTS IN EACH OF THE CONSTITUENCIES. IN THE PROCESS, WE HAVE FACTORED IN OPINIONS VOICED BY VARIOUS SOURCES, CONSIDERED THE 1972 VOTING PATTERNS, AND PONDERED OUR OWN VISCERAL PERCEPTIONS. AT THIS POINT WE FEEL REASONABLY CERTAIN THAT THE PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) WILL WIN 29 SEATS AND THAT THE JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY (JLP) WILL WIN 22 SEATS; REGARDING THE REMAINING NINE SEATS, WE PRESENTLY FIND THAT THEY ARE EITHER TOO CLOSE TO CALL OR ELSE OUR INFORMATION ABOUT THEM IS TOO FRAGMENTARY TO PERMIT A SATISFACTORY ESTIMATE. NEVERTHELESS, ON THE BASIS OF OUR PRESENT ESTIMATE, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT THE PNP SHOULD WIN ROUGHLY 34 OF THE 60 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT-- AT LEAST IF THE NINE SEATS ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE DOUBTS DIVIDE ALONG THE LINES OF THE OTHER 51. SUCH A VICTORY WOULD BE FAR FROM A LANDSLIDE, ALTHOUGH IT PROVIDES A SAFE MAJORITY. IF THIS IS THE RESULT, OUR FIRST INTEREST WILL BE IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE PNP PARLIAMENTARY PARTY. THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF PNP MODERATES AND RADICALS COULD ITSELF BE AN IMPORTANT DETERMINANT IN THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE PNP MOVES TOWARDS AN ENHANCED STATE ROLE.

6. WE DO NOT DISCOUNT ENTIRELY THE POSSIBILITY OF A JLP VICTORY. WE KNOW THAT SEAGA AND HIS PARTY HAVE CONTINUED TO WORK INTENSIVELY IN EACH CONSTITUENCY, WITH RURAL AREAS RECEIVING VERY CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION. THE JLP HAS RECEIVED A PARTICULAR FILLIP AS A RESULT OF THE DEPRESSED STATE OF THE ECONOMY IN THE PARISHES OF THE NORTH COAST WHICH RELY HEAVILY ON TOURISM. MOREOVER, THERE ARE SOME SIGNS OF AN EROSION OF SUPPORT FOR THE PNP AMONG SOME UNION MEMBERS WHO HAVE IN THE

PAST FOUND THE RULING PARTY'S POLICIES ATTRACTIVE. AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINGST 05375 02 OF 02 101950Z

YESTERDAY'S QUESTIONS ABOUT THE IRAN SUGAR DEAL MAY
INDICATE THAT THE JLP WILL WORK MORE VIGOROUSLY--
AND EFFECTIVELY-- IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN.
MOREOVER, ONE IMPONDERABLE WHICH COULD AFFECT THE
JLP'S FORTUNES IS THE ROLE AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE
CHURCHES IN JAMAICA, THEY FEAR THE DRIFT OF THE PNP,
BUT WHAT EFFORTS THEY HAVE MADE TO INFLUENCE THEIR
MEMBERS IS LARGELY UNKNOWN. HOWEVER, IF A JLP VICTORY
OCCURS, THE PARTY'S MAJORITY WOULD LIKELY BE UNCOMFORT-
ABLY SLENDER. THE COMBINATION OF ITS PARLIAMENTARY
WEAKNESS AND THE INEXPERIENCE OF ITS MEMBERS (50 OF
ITS 60 CANDIDATES ARE NEWCOMERS) COULD MAKE THE TASK
OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS--MAINLY ECONOMIC--
WHICH IT INHERITS FROM THE PNP PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT.
GERARD

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL ELECTIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTION FORECASTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KINGST05375
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760457-0007
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761255/aaaabvcm.tel
Line Count: 245
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JUL 2004 by saccheem>; APPROVED <13 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JAMAICA'S ELECTIONS: FIVE DAYS TO GO
TAGS: PINT, JM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006